AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend Paragraph [0064] as follows:

[0064] Referring now to FIG. 3 (A) schematically illustrated therein, in simplified cross-sectional view, are three deposition stages of a cathode sputtering apparatus [[25]]**40** according to another embodiment of the present invention. As illustrated, apparatus [[25]] **40** includes (at least) three serially arranged deposition stations [[26]] **41**, [[27]] **42**, and [[28]] **43**, each ~~comprised of~~ having a facing pair of e.g., circularly-shaped, planar magnetron cathode/target assemblies [[26]] $\mathbf{41_A}$ – [[26]] $\mathbf{41_B}$, [[27]] $\mathbf{42_A}$ – [[27]] $\mathbf{42_B}$, and [[28]] $\mathbf{43_A}$ – [[28]] $\mathbf{43_B}$ of the same diameter but with respective circularly-shaped magnetron magnet assemblies $\mathbf{29_A}$ – $\mathbf{29_B}$, $\mathbf{30_A}$ – $\mathbf{30_B}$, and $\mathbf{31_A}$ – $\mathbf{31_B}$ of progressively increasing diameters ~~$d_3 > d_2 > d_1$~~ $d_6 > d_5 > d_4$. In contrast with the previous embodiment, the spacing between the sputtering surface **S** of each of the planar magnetron cathode/target assemblies and the substrate/workpiece **2** is the same for each deposition stage. However, as in the previous embodiment, respective pairs of shields **32**, **33**, and **34** are provided in spaced adjacency to the peripheries of the sputtering surfaces **S** of each of the cathode/target assemblies [[26]] $\mathbf{41_A}$ – [[26]] $\mathbf{41_B}$, [[27]] $\mathbf{42_A}$ – [[27]] $\mathbf{42_B}$, and [[28]] $\mathbf{43_A}$ – [[28]] $\mathbf{43_B}$.

Please amend Paragraph [0065] as follows:

[0065] As before, in a typical application according to the invention, e.g., manufacture of disk-shaped perpendicular magnetic recording media, a dual-sided, annular disk-shaped precursor substrate/workpiece **2** for magnetic media (optionally with an adhesion layer **2A** thereon) is supplied to apparatus [[25]] **40** at an input end thereof adjacent cathode/target assembly [[26]] $\mathbf{41_A}$ – [[26]] $\mathbf{41_B}$ and transported through apparatus [[25]] **40** for serial (i.e.,

sequential) deposition thereon of a plurality of sub-layers (illustratively three sub-layers) of a magnetically soft underlayer (SUL) **3** at the preferably circularly-shaped cathode/target assemblies [[**26**]] **41**$_A$ – [[**26**]] **41**$_B$, [[**27**]] **42**$_A$ – [[**27**]] **42**$_B$, and [[**28**]] **43**$_A$ – [[**28**]] **43**$_B$.

Please amend Paragraph [0066] as follows:

[0066] According to the invention, the diameters **d**, of the magnetron magnet assemblies **29**$_A$ – **29**$_B$, **30**$_A$ – **30**$_B$, and **31**$_A$ – **31**$_B$ of respective cathode/target assemblies **21**$_A$ – **21**$_B$, **22**$_A$ – **22**$_B$, and **23**$_A$ – **23**$_B$ in FIG. 2 are different for each deposition stage, i.e., different for deposition of each sub-layer of SUL **3**. More specifically, according to the ~~illustrated~~ embodiment illustrated in FIG. 3A, the diameters of the magnetron magnet assemblies of the planar magnetron cathode/target assemblies [[**26**]]**41**$_A$ – [[**26**]]**41**$_B$, [[**27**]]**42**$_A$ – [[**27**]] **42**$_B$, and [[**28**]]**43**$_A$ – [[**28**]]**43**$_B$ increase as the substrate/workpiece moves from an upstream cathode/target assembly to a downstream cathode/target assembly for sequential deposition of the various sub-layers, such that [[d_3]]d_6 > [[d_2]]d_5 > [[d_1]]d_4.

Please amend Paragraph [0067] as follows:

[0067] Adverting to FIG. 3 (B), schematically illustrated therein are the (relative) sputtered film thickness profiles (or distributions) of the three illustrated deposition stages of apparatus [[**25**]] **40** of FIG. 3 (A) and the collective (or overall) sputtered film thickness profile. As is evident from FIG. 3 (B), the (relative) sputtered film thickness profile (or distribution) is a function of the diameter **d** of the magnetron magnet assembly. Specifically, the first cathode/target assembly [[**26**]] **41**$_A$ – [[**26**]] **41**$_B$ with the relatively narrow diameter **d** = [[d_1]] d_4 centrally located magnetron magnet assemblies **29**$_A$ - **29**$_B$ provides a relatively steeply inclined

sputtered film thickness profile, i.e., steeply decreasing film thickness from the ID to the OD of the annular disk-shaped substrate/workpiece; the second cathode/target assembly [[27]] $\underline{42_A}$ – [[27]] $\underline{42_B}$ with magnetron magnet assembly $30_A - 30_B$ with a moderately increased diameter **d** = [[d_2]] $\underline{d_5}$ provides a somewhat less steeply inclined sputtered film thickness profile, i.e., less steeply decreasing film thickness from the ID to the OD of the disk; and the third cathode/target assembly [[28]] $\underline{43_A}$ – [[28]] $\underline{43_B}$ with magnetron magnet assembly $31_A - 31_B$ with significantly increased diameter **d** = [[d_3]] $\underline{d_6}$ provides an inverted, steeply inclined sputtered film thickness profile, i.e., steeply increasing film thickness from the ID to the OD of the disk.

Please amend Paragraph [0068] as follows:

[0068] According to the invention, the magnetron magnet diameters [[d_1]] $\underline{d_4}$, [[d_2]] $\underline{d_5}$, and [[d_1]] $\underline{d_6}$ of cathode/target assemblies [[26_A]] $\underline{41_A}$ – [[26_B]] $\underline{41_B}$, [[27_A]] $\underline{42_A}$ – [[27_B]] $\underline{42_B}$, and [[28_A]] $\underline{43_A}$ – [[28_B]] $\underline{43_B}$ are selected for a particular application such that the respective sub-layers formed thereat *collectively* form a substantially uniform thickness layer of the selected material, as shown in FIG. 3 (B).

Please amend Paragraph [0070] as follows:

[0070] The invention advantageously admits of a variety of apparatus configurations, as for example, shown in FIGS. 4 (A) – 4 (B) and FIGS. 5 (A) – 5 (B). More specifically, FIGS. 4 (A) and 4 (B) respectively schematically illustrate, in simplified top sectional views, in-line and circularly-configured single chamber, three deposition stage cathode sputtering apparatus [[**40**]] **140** and [[**41**]] **141**comprising a single vacuum chamber; and FIGS. 5 (A) and 5 (B)

schematically illustrate, in simplified top sectional views, in-line and circularly-configured multi-chamber, three deposition stage cathode sputtering apparatus [[**50**]] **150** and [[**51**]] **151** comprising separate vacuum chambers for each cathode/target assembly. In each instance, the direction of motion of substrates/workpieces **2** through the apparatus is indicated by the arrows in the figures.